Developing a Strong Work Ethic

What is work ethic?
One definition indicates that work ethic is a set of values based on the virtues of hard work and diligence and may also include other attributes (Wikipedia). Students that begin employment with a positive work ethic enhance their value.

Why should you develop a strong work ethic?
- Achieve more of your goals
- More valuable employee
- Leads to more success in all aspects of your life

Ten Characteristics of a Strong Work Ethic
Answer the questions below to determine if you think you have that characteristic of work ethic.

- Attendance and Punctuality: Do you have a regular work attendance? Or do you miss a lot of days? Are you on time in the morning and for meetings? Or do you run late often?
- Integrity: This is an evaluation of an individual's moral qualities. Are your actions at work ethical? Or are your actions at work questionable?
- Teamwork: Are you able to work with others efficiently? Or do you get into conflicts easily?
- Appearance: How do you appear to those around you? Do you appear organized and professional? Or do you appear overwhelmed?
- Attitude: Do you have a positive attitude at work? Or are you always complaining? Are you able to cooperate with co-workers and management? Or do you dislike accepting tasks from others?
- Productivity: Are you able to do the tasks you are given in a reasonable amount of time? Or do you never really finish any tasks?
- Organizational skills: Are you organized? Or do you lose materials?
- Communication: Can you communicate effectively to those with whom you work? Or do you avoid communication or cause conflicts?
- Responsibility: Are you responsible for your actions? Do you take responsibility in your work?
- Respect: Do you respect your co-workers? Or do you show disrespect to those around you?

Tips
- Arrive early to work to allow yourself time to prepare for the day.
- A great attendance record is an attribute of a strong work ethic.
- Maintain a professional demeanor at all times (see Workplace Etiquette).
- Remain positive even while receiving feedback from others (even if you feel the feedback is not useful or appropriate).
• Take initiative in your work. Don’t wait for someone to tell you exactly what to do. Sometimes you will need approval from higher up before you can jump ahead. You can ask how you can help with the next project.

• Be dependable by honoring commitments you make to others and your employer. Don’t take on more than you can handle because this will reduce your dependability if the tasks become more than you can handle.

• Strive to do a good job the first time. Quality of work is usually more important than quantity. Do the level of work required for the job.

• Take pride in your work.

• Give credit to those who help you. Be gracious and respect what others have contributed. Say thank you.

• Be assertive during conflicts and listen to points raised by others.

• Ensure that your written and verbal communications with others are productive and effective. Follow up on an email if you have not heard from someone in a while. After a discussion, confirm with the other person that you both agree what was just discussed by summarizing the main points of the discussion.

• Acknowledge your strengths and weaknesses. Ask for help when you need assistance at work.

Activities to Do On Your Own

• Often employers will have formal or informal evaluations of employee performance. Use this evaluation to determine what you can do to improve your work ethic.

• Make an agenda and be organized.

• Set a goal for yourself at work and make a plan on how to achieve it.

• Ask your supervisor to evaluate your work ethic and give you feedback on areas that may need some improvement.

• Review each of the ten characteristics of work ethics and determine which one ethic you want to improve and set a goal for yourself.

• Think how you can apply a strong work ethic to your current situation and implement them.

Other Resources


• How to Develop a Strong Work Ethic. By eHow Careers & Work Editor: [www.ehow.com/how_2045949_develop-work-ethic.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2045949_develop-work-ethic.html)